



BRAD CHAPPELL



Heading down from Califer Hill

12km/8miles

5hrs

Califer Hill/Rafford

A circular walk to the summit of Califer Hill, with its fine views of the Moray Firth and the Sutherland Hills, returning via Lower Rafford and the Dava Way.



There are geocaches on/near this route (see below)

The walk

A circular walk along minor roads and footpaths which starts from Leancoil Hospital at the southern edge of Forres, includes stunning views from the Califer Viewpoint, skirts the edge of the Rafford Community and returns to Forres along the Dava Way disused railway and provides a view of the Forres, Burn of Mosset, Flood Alleviation Scheme. A shorter circular route of four miles starting from Rafford Church that includes the Viewpoint is also described below.

This walk is NOT way marked. Walkers are responsible for their own navigation and use of the tracks and footpaths under the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. See www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

The walk can be undertaken in either direction. These directions take the walker clockwise as the 2.6 mile road section is undertaken at the outset. Take great care on the narrow roads!

Public transport Bus No 336 is available to the start point at Leancoil Hospital which is one mile south of the Town Centre on the B9010. Free car parking is available 100 yards beyond the hospital at the Council Wood Car Park.

Starting at Leancoil Hospital (NJ 049581), head away from Forres along St Leonard's Road keeping to the footpath at the left side of the road.



As the footpath comes to an end continue straight ahead for some 200 yards then bear left on the minor road (NJ 055579). Continue straight ahead at the cross roads. Follow this minor road passing Newforres Farm on your left and as you curve left and uphill you will pass Newforres Quarry on your right.

Continue along the minor road to the cross roads (NJ 073575) where you go straight ahead (shorter circular route from Rafford Church joins at this point). The minor road can be seen climbing the hill in front of you by zig zag bends. To your right you can see the tower and remains of Blervie Castle which was built in the 1600s. You will be able to see the tower for much of the walk.

Follow the minor road up the hill and about a ¼ of

a mile after it straightens, at the crest, you will see a brown, viewpoint sign pointing off the road to the left. Turn left and enjoy a rest on the seat and the panoramic view of Forres and the Moray Firth (NJ 084572). A viewing platform indicates directions and the distance to places that may be seen.

The vista provides ample reward for the effort of the climb and the 2.6 miles that you have walked so far.

Return to the minor road and retrace your steps by turning right and walking back some 200 yards until you see a track on your left signed Califermoss and Laverock Height (NJ 082570).



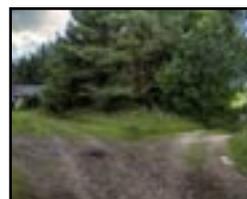
Take this track and then take the right fork at the two Y junctions until you pass two houses on your right and

cross over a stream at Burnside (NJ 084564).

Turn right, signposted Sourbank and Rafford. Follow the footpath downhill passing through a metal gate at the bottom. The path can be slippery when wet. Continue straight ahead and shortly, when the road turns sharp left, continue straight ahead into a grassy lane (which might appear to be a private drive) passing Parkview bungalow on your left and the small Sourbank pumping station on your right (NJ 075561).



Continue on the path as it curves to the right with the stream running alongside on your right. At T junction turn right joining a farm track. Just before you reach the farm buildings at Granary take the right track, keeping the buildings on your left and cross over a wooden bridge.



Continue on the farm track with good views of Blervie Castle out to your right on the horizon.



You will now be approaching Rafford Church (NJ 061563), with its distinctive tower.

The church was built in 1826 with later alterations which include

IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?

Terrain
Stiles None
Suitable for most abilities

PLANNING

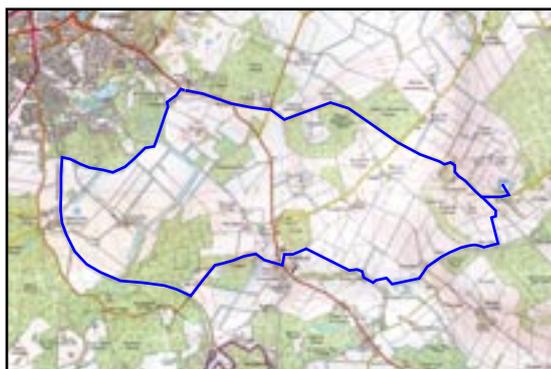
Start/Parking
Leancoil Hospital
Parking at Council Wood Car Park
Grid Ref: NJ049581
Refreshments
Town Centre
Public Toilets
High Street
Public Transport
Bluebird Buses from Inverness/Aberdeen
Scotrail from Inverness/Aberdeen

MAPS

Ordnance Survey
Landranger 27

GEOCACHES

Room For A View
Water of Life (Dallas Dhu)
Dava Way 1
Dava Way 2
Dava Way 3



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visit our website: www.forresfootpathstrust.org.uk



THE VIEW FROM CALIFER HILL

a magnificent stained glass window in memory of Captain Galloway who was killed in WWI. Just prior to the Church take the footpath down to the left turning left where it becomes hard surfaced until it meets the road. Take care and cross the road proceeding straight ahead on the road that is signed for Dallas Dhu distillery and Forres via Dava Way 3½ miles.

Continue on this road as it passes bungalows on your left: look back from here for a superb view of Rafford Church. As you leave Rafford behind, the road straightens and you will see a railway bridge crossing the road in the



distance. Just before you reach this bridge (NJ 060558), turn right and follow the signpost marked Forres

via Dava Way 2½ miles. Walk up the footpath and continue ahead as you join the path along the disused railway, now designated the Dava Way – see www.davaway.org.uk for more details.

You will shortly cross over the Mosset Burn as it passes under the embankment and then pass the Dallas Dhu distillery on your left: it is a disused distillery, maintained in working order as a museum by Historic Scotland.

You could pay a visit or simply take a rest at the picnic tables provided.

www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/forres/dallasdhu

Continue along the railway until you pass under a bridge (NJ 036574). Here, turn sharp right and climb the steps up to the track that crosses the bridge. You do not cross over the bridge but turn left at the top of the steps and after about 200 yards turn left onto a track through woodland maintained by the Forres



Community Woodlands Trust.

Ignore tracks that go off to the left and continue along this wide forest track with the woodlands on your left and open fields on your right.

As you approach the Dam that will provide Forres with protection from flooding by the Mosset Burn, you turn left into the woodland and then almost immediately right. You have joined another of the Trust's walks with yellow way marks. Just over the crest, turn right again to join a narrow, hardcore track. This will bring you along the top of a ridge with the Dam works below. This £20 million project completed in August 2009 is designed to prevent flooding of the lower areas of Forres by retaining flood water in the fields upstream of the dam. The path will lead you down to the Mosset Burn which

you cross by the bridge and then climb up the far side to turn left on a track that leads you up through Chapelton Farm which is no longer a working farm. Continue through the Farm joining the tarmac road and straight ahead you will see your starting point of Leanchcoil Hospital.

Shorter Circular Walk from Rafford Church – 4 miles

From Rafford Church (NJ 061543) return to the B 9010 and turn right (towards Forres) along the road for 50 yards. Turn right at the war memorial and continue along the minor road past Blenvie Castle until you come to the first cross roads (NJ073575). Here, you turn right and join the main route instructions above to walk up the hill to the viewpoint. Then follow the instructions until you return to Rafford Church.